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SPOLETO FESTIVAL "PHE ZULU THEATER COMPANY"
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: ONE OF THE LARGEST FESTIVALS DEVOTED TO THE ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES TOOK PLACE RECENTLY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. IT WAS THE AMERICAN HALF OF THE SPOLETO FESTIVAL OF TWO WORLDS ORIGINATED BY GIAN CARLO MENOTTI AND IT ATTRACTED LARGE CROWDS AND PERFORMERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD. THE GROUP ATTRACTING MOST OF THE ATTENTION DURING THE FESTIVAL'S OPENING WEEK WAS A THEATER COMPANY FROM SOUTH AFRICA. WITH A REPORT, HERE IS ----------.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- PHE ZULU MUSIC TO ESTABLISH THEN UNDER

ANNCR: THE PHE ZULU THEATER COMPANY FROM SOUTH AFRICA EMBODIED THE SPIRIT OF THE FESTIVAL OF TWO WORLDS BY PRESENTING AN AFRICAN VERSION OF SHAKESPEARE'S CLASSIC TRAGEDY, "MACBETH." IN A SPECTACLE THAT EMBRACED DANCE, MUSIC AND DRAMA, THE TROOP OF FORTY PERFORMERS PORTRAYED THE STORY OF "UMABATHA," A ZULU CHIEF DRIVEN TO EXTRAORDINARY ACTS IN HIS REACH FOR POWER. "UMABATHA" WAS WRITTEN TEN YEARS AGO BY THE PHE ZULU COMPANY'S FOUNDER, DIRECTOR AND CHIEF ACTOR, WELCOME MSOMI. ACCORDING TO MISTER MSOMI, THE UNIVERSALITY OF SHAKESPEARE'S ORIGINAL TRAGEDY WAS PARTICULARLY SUITED TO THE HISTORY OF ZULULAND IN THE 1820S...

TAPE: MSOMI :45

"WITH THE STORY OF MACBETH YOU FIND THERE ARE SO MANY SIMILARITIES WITH WHAT HAPPENED IN ZULULAND. AT THE TIME OF OUR SHAKA, THE GREAT KING SHAKA ZULU, THERE WAS A WOMAN FROM THE ROYAL FAMILY WHO PLOTTED THE KILLING OF SHAKA. WHAT SHE DID SHE GOT OTHER BORTHERS TO KILL SHAKA, SO THE SHAKA WAS ASSASSINATED AND DINGANE, HIS BROTHER, TOOK OVER. BUT HE DIDN'T RULE FOR A LONG TIME BECAUSE HE WAS ALSO KILLED BY OTHER BROTHERS, SO IT'S A SIMILAR STORY TO WHAT YOU FIND IN

TAPE: (CONT'D)

MACBETH WHERE MACBETH KILLS DUNCAN AND MACBETH BEING KILLED BY MACDUFF SO IT'S WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED IN ZULULAND."

ANNCR: THOUGH THIS PERFORMANCE OF "UMABATHA" AT SPOLETO, U.S.A. WAS THE FIRST TIME THE PHE ZULU COMPANY HAD BEEN SEEN IN THE UNITED STATES, THE COMPANY FOUND THE SAME ENTHUSIASTIC ACCLAIM THAT HAD GREETED THE PRODUCTION IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. IN VISITS TO GREAT BRITAIN'S ROYAL SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, AND, EVEN IN PERFORMANCES IN SOUTH AFRICA, AUDIENCES HAVE BEEN AMAZED AT THE BEAUTY OF MSOMI'S SETTING OF ZULU TRADITIONS. MANY PEOPLE OF ZULU DESCENT, MSOMI SAYS, HAVE WELCOMED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REGAIN A PART OF THEIR PAST THAT WAS BEING FORGOTTEN.

TAPE: MSOMI :43

"THERE WERE SO MANY THINGS WHICH WERE HAPPENING TO THE BLACK PEOPLE AND ESPECIALLY TO THE ZULU PEOPLE. THAT IS, WITH MODERNIZATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION PEOPLE TEND TO LEAVE OUT SOME OF THE GOOD WHICH THEY HAVE, WHICH IS SO IMPORTANT, SO RICH. I THINK, AS A PERSON OR AS A NATION, PEOPLE HAVE TO HAVE SOMETHING TO CLING TO. AND SOME OF THE THINGS WHICH THE ZULU PEOPLE HAD -- THE TRADITIONS AND THE CUSTOMS -- I THOUGHT WERE FANTASTIC AND I FELT I SHOULD BE ONE OF THOSE WHO HELPED PRESERVE ALL THESE TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS AND LET THE PEOPLE KNOW THAT WHAT THEY HAVE IS GOOD."

ANNCR: WELCOME MSOMI IS RELATED TO THE ROYAL FAMILY OF THE ZULU KING SIPRIAN, AND AS A CHILD ABSORBED MANY OF THE TRADITIONS OF HIS PEOPLE. DRAWING ON WHAT HE KNEW OF THE ZULU PEOPLE'S BACKGROUND AND DEVISING CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS TO AUGMENT THE TRADITIONAL, MSOMI HAS WOVEN A COLORFUL SPECTACLE -- THE DRAMA HEIGHTENED BY TRADITIONAL DANCE AND MUSIC.

ASIDE FROM THE PRINCIPALS OF THE DRAMA, ALL THE CHARACTERS ON STAGE TAKE PART IN VARIOUS RITUALS -- THE WITCHES READING OF

VOICE: (CONT'D) UMABATHA'S TRAGIC FUTURE, BURIAL RITES, DANCES OF JUBILATION AND CORONATION. FROM START TO FINISH, "UMABATHA" IS ACTED AND DANCED IN TRADITIONAL, COLORFUL COSTUMES AND PERFORMED IN THE ZULU LANGUAGE. THIS, IN WELCOME MSOMI'S MIND, IS CRUCIAL TO THE IMPACT OF THE PLAY.

OPT.

TAPE: MSOMI: :33

"SOMEONE WOULD HAVE SAID IF MAYBE YOU HAD DONE IT IN ENGLISH, MAYBE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD BETTER, BUT THAT WOULD KILL IT BECAUSE IT WOULDN'T BE US. THE ACTORS WOULDN'T BE THEMSELVES. IT'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING THAT COMES FROM THE HEART AND YOU UNDERSTAND IT BETTER SO THAT IS WHY WE DECIDED TO DO IT IN ZULU AND LET THE ACTORS EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN THE ZULU WAY."

ANNCR: TWO ASPECTS OF THE "UMABATHA" PERFORMANCES AT SPOLETO-USA WERE OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE PHE ZULU COMPANY AND THE FESTIVAL ORGANIZERS -- THE GROUP, RECEIVED A VERY WARM WELCOME, THE EPITOME OF SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY, IN CHARLESTON, A CITY WHERE RACIAL DIFFERENCES MIGHT ONCE HAVE MADE SUCH A RECEPTION IMPOSSIBLE. PERHAPS THE KEENEST INTEREST IN THE PERFORMANCES CAME FROM BLACK AMERICANS AT THE FESTIVAL, AMERICANS CONSCIOUS OF THEIR ROOTS IN AFRICAN CULTURE WHO INVITED MEMBERS OF THE GROUP TO THEIR HOMES AND SCHOOLS. THIS, MR. MSOMI SAID, WAS ESPECIALLY REWARDING TO THE COMPANY:

TAPE: MSOMI :32

"WE HAVE VISITED THE SCHOOLS TEACHING THEM SOME OF THE DANCES AND SHOWING THEM SOME OF HISTORY AND THEY ENJOY THAT TREMENDOUSLY. I DO BELIEVE THAT IT'S A GOOD DIRECTION FOR THE BLACK AMERICANS TO FIND THEIR BACKGROUND. IT GIVES THEM SO MUCH, SOMETHING TO CALL THEIR OWN. AND I BELIEVE WITH OUR HELP AND MEETING THEM AND SHARING WITH THEM IT WILL MAKE QUITE AN IMPACT."

ANNCR: WELCOME MSOMI, DIRECTOR OF SOUTH AFRICA'S PHE ZULU THEATER COMPANY WHICH APPEARED RECENTLY AT THE SPOLETO USA FESTIVAL IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

TAPE: ZULU MUSIC TO CLOSE AS DESIRED.

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